

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: February 11, 2016

Agenda Item: 2016-2017 Upland Bird Hunting Seasons, Quotas and HD Boundaries

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Final

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 5 minutes

Background

Season structures and hunting district boundaries are adopted biennially for most game species every other year between December and final adoptions in February. FWP proposes adopting the existing (2015) structure except for specific changes. Proposals are based on population status and/or other circumstances.

For the 2016 and 2017 upland bird seasons FWP proposes a number of changes to simplify the turkey regulations and expand opportunity. These include combining the spring and fall regulations into one brochure (a draft 2016 regulation brochure is in the Commission packet) and eliminating permits but offering three license types, which, in the proper combinations a hunter could hold up to nine licenses per year:

- General Hunting Area License available over-the-counter
- Regional Turkey Area Licenses available over-the-counter
- Special Drawing Licenses valid in specific areas of Regions 2, 3 and 4. The four current Region 3 hunting districts are to be combined into one.

A change from the December proposal is an increase in the proposed R3 spring and fall licenses and quota ranges. Except for calendar rotation, all other aspects of the upland bird season structure are to remain unchanged from the 2015 regulations. All these changes are referenced in the Upland Game Bird Master List for the December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results

Upland bird season comments were received during scoping and included interest in expanded opportunities. Public comment ran from Dec. 10 to Jan 22. We received 24 comments with 10 in favor of the current proposal, there were none opposed. Others spoke to wanting turkeys declared a nuisance, offering opportunities in counties that are currently closed, lengthening the upland season and increasing bag limit,

Alternatives and Analysis

Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions or no change from 2015 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale

Rationale for individual proposals was included in the Dec. 10th Commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Feb. 11th Commission meeting.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the final 2016 and 2017 Upland Bird Hunting Seasons and Hunting Districts as presented by FWP. I also move to adopt all other portions of the previous 2014-2015 upland bird season regulations not affected by the Commission's actions today.